

Building a Winning Culture for Long-Term Success

Posted on Apr 11, 2012, Posted by [Val Workman](#) Category [Product Management](#)

[*Investment Leadership: Building a Winning Culture for Long-Term Success*](#) is a comprehensive guide to best practices within the investment industry. I talked with Beth Michaels, the coauthor of this book, and she confirmed my opinion that the investment culture was used because it was a hot topic at the time, and that our own product management culture could have been used just as well for an example. Jim Ware, Beth Michaels, and Dale Primer use leadership principles that are independent of culture.

Cultural Leadership is a profession with its own set of practices, the same as product management. The book is great for product management teams, and those involved in the innovation process. What makes it great is that it helps makes us aware that product initiatives are investments, but more importantly, it provides guidance into how we can shape the culture we find ourselves in, into a culture that nurtures long-term success.

The book provides a set of assessment tools that can be used to determine what type of culture you're really in. They introduce you to the Myers-Briggs personality types, provide case studies for clarity and provide the information you need to answer questions like:

- What is your Myers-Briggs type?
- Based on your personality type, what are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How do preferences affect the way your team members work together?
- How do preferences affect your market research? Feature selection?
- Has your team explored how diversity in thinking styles can add value to decision making?

- Can you think of a team conflict that might be explainable by the members' varying preferences?

The book provides additional measurement tools used to help you:

- Identify the dominate culture in your own organization.
- Assess how a team's dominate culture fits with its core business.
- Determine if there is alignment and congruence in the employees' view of the company.
- Achieve balance between the four dominate culture types for best performance.

I found this section helpful because they use the same diagrams I've used for years in competitive analyses comparisons. Because they use common measurement and reporting techniques, it's easy to connect these measurements to many other product initiatives. The book provides information on how to diagnose culture through these measurements. They claim, "Culture doesn't have to be invisible. By measuring your firm's beliefs about culture, you can decide where to invest precious resources for improvements."

The book will show you how to:

- Determine the true core values of your product management team, based on people's behaviors.
- Quickly quantify your team's people-based needs and interests.
- See differences between what your executive staff wants in the team's culture and what they have right now.
- Identify specific opportunities for growth and improvement.

Beth Michaels, one of the authors, has agreed to speak in a [webinar](#) for our open product management community, the PMV on April 18th on some of the topics in the book. There really is too much to try to cover here on this post or in a webinar.

Culture has as much if not more impact on the success of the product management team than technology and process support. Yet it is the least talked about, and the least understood. I hope everyone takes advantage of the opportunity to listen to her during the webinar.

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